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ABSTRACT

An investigation examined the way in which specific women were selected for and inducted into school leadership. Each had graduated from a newly designed preparation program built around state and national standards, focused on teaching and learning as the central role of schools, and committed to collaborative approaches as the best way to achieve shared goals. Pressures on women to conform to traditional norms for school leaders as they entered school leadership were examined. The investigation also explored any impact that gender-associated leadership preferences had on their socialization. A multiple case study approach was selected and data sources used were primary and naturalistic in nature (statements, documents, and observations). The 15 students in the study graduated with clear ideas about leadership and their preferences for leadership style. They had studied the concept of socialization and knew that during their transition into leadership they would encounter both explicit and implicit expectations for their role. The ten students interviewed indicated an awareness of socialization. Confidence grounded in competence characterized all of the program's graduates. Most attributed some of their success to resisting socialization during their preparation. Their knowledge of who they were, what they stood for, and how to work with people were connected to their graduate studies. The women identified several characteristics associated with a feminine style as important to their success as assistant principals and principals. (Contains 2 tables and 91 references.) (BT)

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New Rules for the Game:

How Women Leaders Resist Socialization to Old Norms

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This investigation examined the way in which selected women were inducted into school leadership. Each graduated from a newly designed preparation program built around state and national standards, focused on teaching and learning as the central role of schools, and committed to collaborative approaches as the best way to achieve shared goals.

The study was based on several assumptions: (1) school leadership is increasingly integrative, requiring complex skills and focused on principles of teaching and learning as well as participative decision-making (Speck, 1995); (2) every school manifests its own culture reflected in traditions, norms and values and new leaders must come to understand the dynamics of their settings (Deal & Kennedy, 1999; Deal & Peterson, 1999); and (3) contemporary leadership should focus on building learning communities rather than managing institutions (Lambert, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1996; Speck, 1999).

The induction of new school leaders often shapes their behavior throughout their career (Greenfield, 1985). A pioneering study of the assistant principalship (Marshall, 1992) offered a framework for examining socialization to the role. Marshall (1985) suggested seven explicit tasks that shaped the assistant principal's own sense of competence and contributed to the way they were viewed by others in the school. The beginning years were identified as defining to the role (Hartzell, Williams & Nelson, 1995). Attitudes developed and responses cultivated during the initial months as an assistant principal greatly influence behavior patterns and leadership capabilities.

Because the subjects of this study were women, the investigation also examined any impact that gender-associated leadership preferences had on their socialization. Though Eagly, Karau, and Johnson (1992) found significant differences only in the preference for a democratic style and in higher task orientation, other studies suggested additional differences. Shakeshaft (1987a), for instance, suggested that in schools headed by women, relationships with others are central to all actions. The leaders spend more time with people, communicate more, care more about individual differences, are more concerned with teachers and marginal students, and devote more energy to motivating others. In these schools, teaching and learning is the major focus. Regan and Brooks (1995) suggested that feminist attributes of leadership included collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision.

Changing Views of Leadership Preparation

In the early 1990s the North Carolina General Assembly launched an initiative to examine administrator preparation programs in the state. At the time it was possible to be licensed as a school leader by taking a few classes and earning an endorsement to another masters degree and there was great variety among programs (Quality Candidate Committee, 1994).

An Educational Leadership Task Force, established by the General Assembly, found that administrator training programs and entrance standards to those programs should be improved. Task Force members believed that strengthening leadership training would improve the quality of the state's public schools.

As a result of the Task Force's recommendations, the state disestablished all administrator preparation programs and invited campuses of the state university system to submit proposals for creation of a new Master's in School Administration degree (MSA). This competitive process resulted in a reduction in the number of Master's programs to seven (later nine) across the state.

New Masters of School Administration Programs

The new Master's in School Administration programs were selected on several criteria including their ability to show how the common core of knowledge and skills emphasized in the program would be grounded in problems of practice. Universities were also required to demonstrate how instructional practice and methodology would incorporate practice and problem-based approaches.

In 1993, the state legislature created the Standards Board for Public School Administration charged with establishing standards for the licensure of administrators in North Carolina. The Standards Board, after consultation with experts and practitioners across the state, created a set of ten standards identifying what the state's future school leaders should believe, know, and be able to do. Knowledge, skills, and professional perspectives expected of school leaders were described for each standard.

As North Carolina developed its own standards for school leaders, the Council of Chief State School Officers developed a set of national standards (1996). The North Carolina standards paralleled the national ones and while greater in number and specificity incorporated the same themes.

Both the national standards and those developed for North Carolina emphasize the complexity of the leadership role (Bolman & Deal, 1991), the importance of moral and ethical grounding (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Sergiovanni,

1992; 1996), the value of working closely with parents and community (Epstein & Salinas, 1993; Prestine, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1994), and the importance of student learning as the primary function of schools (Newman, 1991).

The national standards identify teaching and learning as the primary purpose of schooling (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) and this emerged as the central theme. Complementing the focus on learning and student achievement is the importance of assuring that schools consider the individual needs of students. Candidates, therefore, must examine each scenario on the licensure test in light of its impact on the student--often requiring deviation from established practice and policy.

The importance of working with parents and community to support student learning is yet another theme. Establishing a close working relationship with parents and designing ways in which parents and other care givers can be actively involved in school life is central to contemporary school leadership (Comer 1996; Epstein & Salinas, 1993).

Resisting Socialization to Old Norms

The creation of better leaders for our schools requires not only better preparation programs. It also requires a system for resisting socialization to old norms while simultaneously creating new ones. Gender-related leadership styles and preferences are part of such a system.

Questions abound about whether or not there are gender differences in leadership styles and preferences. Eagly, Karau, and Johnson (1992), for instance, conducted a meta-analysis of research on gender differences in educational leadership. According to the authors, the key difference supported by their systematic, quantitative analysis of the literature was a preference for a more democratic, participative style.

Such findings are clouded by the realization that there is still a paucity of research on women in educational leadership (Shakeshaft, 1987a, 1987b; Banks, 1995). Further, critics rightly point out that much of the research looks at women through the lens of leadership studies based on men (Shakeshaft, 1989; Lynch, 1990).

A further complication arises because those styles and preferences associated with the "feminine" or the "feminist" do not necessarily apply only to women. There are perhaps more women than men who fit the stereotype, but certainly there are women principals who match the masculine stereotype and men who believe and practice in ways consistent with the feminine. Gender is seen as

cultural, not biological. Therefore, when terms like "feminine leadership styles" are used, they refer to both male and female leaders. Even the term "woman" or "women leaders" is meant to be inclusive of all who practice in particular ways.

Without drawing distinct gender lines, then, it is possible to discuss a set of leadership styles and preferences that are associated with the feminine. Those include the preference for democratic rather than autocratic organizations and cultures that are inclusive and collaborative (Shakeshaft, 1987a; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Irby & Brown, 1995). In addition, there is support for the premise that feminine leaders are more attuned to instruction, teachers, and children (Frasher & Frasher, 1979; McGrath, 1992). Finally, there is evidence that because women develop differently, they are more likely to demonstrate an ethic of care that is grounded in relationships rather than laws (Gilligan, 1982, 1985; Porat, 1991).

There is strong similarity between these preferences associated with feminine leadership and the standards grounding the preparation program discussed in this paper. For instance, every aspect of the program reflects the centrality of teaching and learning in schools. If women leaders remain closer to teachers and are more firmly grounded in instruction (Andrews & Basom, 1990; Charters & Jocick, 1981; Pavan & Reid, 1994), then they are more aligned with the standards.

Another assumption embedded in the standards is that school decisions are based on what is in the best interests of students, both individually and collectively. If women leaders evidence an abiding concern for children, especially for marginal students and those without advocates (Brown & Irby, 1993; Edson, 1987; Lightfoot, 1983;), then again there is correspondence between gender-related preferences in decision making and the standards.

The program also exhibits a bias toward democratic schools, which is again consistent with standards. Inclusive practices, both within the school and its community, are program emphases. Such beliefs and practices characterize a feminine style. Hudson (1993), for instance, developed a model for a feminine understanding of power. Leaders who value and seek a sense of community in the school, share power, and attend to relational issues characterized the model.

Language choice is another indicator of a more inclusive style. Several studies have found that women leaders tend to use more conditional, tentative language (Marshall, 1988). Based on the work of Holmes (1984), Marshall suggests that such language used by women does not reflect uncertainty. Instead, it is a deliberate effort to invite others into the conversation, to give others a voice.

There are clear parallels, then, between the standards and feminine leadership beliefs, styles, and preferences for practice. Given that, women graduates might have some success in holding on to what they believe as they make the transition from preparation into jobs. Perhaps they are better equipped to resist the strong powers of schools as institutions to socialize new leaders into old norms. That possibility is at the heart of the study reported here.

Role Socialization

While limited research has been conducted on the socialization experiences of new school leaders, there is a long history of research on socialization in other settings (Merton, 1968; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). From these works emerges a definition of socialization. Merton (1968) suggests that socialization is the process whereby one acquires the knowledge skills and dispositions needed to perform a role. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) describe it as the "process by which one is taught and learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role" (p. 211).

Studies of socialization in educational settings suggest that the process is informal rather than formal, intense and short in duration (Augenstein & Konnert, 1991; Crow, Mecklowitz, Weekes, 1992; Duke, Isaacson, Sagor & Schmuck, 1984; Greenfield, 1985). The informality of the process, coupled with the short duration reflects an emphasis on what Schein (1971) describes as a custodial orientation, an unwillingness to challenge traditional norms for the role.

Several studies suggest that the socialization process reflects a series of steps or stages. Mascaro (1974) found that elementary principals traversed a set of stages as they recognized the constraints on their time and their ability to effect change. Similarly, Gussner (1974) described five stages in the process of socialization such as moving from a focus on absorbing information to articulating personal concerns, and then, as one becomes more self-assured, moving toward becoming a true contributor.

Greenfield (1977a, 1977b) articulated two components: anticipatory socialization, prior to assuming a new role, and situational adjustment, after assuming the role. Parkay, Currie and Rhodes (1992) suggested a more complex view of socialization. They argued that socialization involves moving from concern with survival in the role to taking control of the role, to establishing a primary focus on curricular and instructional supervision. This hierarchy, patterned after Maslow (1968) suggests that socialization involves shifting one's power from positional to personal,

and shifting from viewing one's role as restricted to one of growth and continued learning.

Researchers also suggested that a major part of socialization is learning the regularities of the job---daily routines and tasks, and coming to grips with the newly assumed role. Gussner (1974) described this as "internalizing" the new role. Marshall (1985) introduces the idea of "professional shock" as one confronts the realities of a new role.

A study of mid-career socialization identified several factors which influence role conception---societal, occupational, organizational, and individual (Crow, 1993). Societal factors include perceptions of the role by others, the image of the profession and the degree to which the role influences other occupations. Occupational factors reflect influences by others in the occupational community and the way the role was traditionally conceived. Organizational factors refer to the perception of the role by others in the organization---co-workers, subordinates and superiors. Finally, individual factors include ones personal orientation to the job, family influences, and personal conceptions of the role.

The way the principal conceptualizes the role has a significant impact on expectations for an assistant principal. The principal establishes the overall leadership climate in the school, defines areas of responsibility and also evaluates the assistant's work.

Other school personnel, however, also impact socialization. Teachers, secretaries, custodians and other staff hold their own view of how the role "ought to be done." Through their interactions with the assistant, and through their affirmation or lack of affirmation they signal the appropriateness of certain priorities and behaviors (Crow, 1993).

One important issue in role socialization is the degree to which one is willing to challenge long established norms. Schein (1971) identified both custodial and innovative orientations as critical to socialization. The custodial orientation is characterized by "total acceptance on the part of the practitioner of the currently existing norms of that profession " (p. 521). Innovative orientation, on the other hand, involves dissatisfaction with the traditional norms of the profession. Schein suggested that the role innovator was willing to question the focus of professional work, and the relationship of the work to others.

More recent studies of socialization in educational settings confirm a continued emphasis on custodial socialization. Reliance on such an approach in the face of

newly trained school leaders, schooled in different approaches and emphases, may prove problematic for both schools and school leaders.

Organizational Socialization

Beginning a new career or entering a new organization requires learning the knowledge and skills associated with the new setting (Hart, 1991; Parkay, Currie & Rhodes, 1992; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) as well as the implicit and explicit norms of the role (Schein, 1971, 1992). Many variables contribute to this milieu. In schools they include the climate of the school, the relationship with the principal, the support received within and outside of the school, and the experience of the assistant principal (Hart, 1991).

Adapting to these many variables often leads to stress and frustration among new school leaders (Duke. 1988; Marshall, 1992). Such leaders report a sense of isolation and loneliness, feeling unskilled and unprepared, and stress associated with the need to attend to multiple tasks within a rigid and inflexible schedule.

Other factors were identified as contributing to the socialization of new school leaders. Leithwood and Musella (1991) suggest that age, experience, education, gender and years of experience may influence the way a school leader performs as an instructional leader.

The Assistant Principal

Perhaps no other role in school leadership is so fraught with ambiguity and role complexity as that of the assistant principal. For most school leaders, it is the role which they assume upon entry to the field. For many, their experience as an assistant principal shapes and molds their long-term view of school leadership. It is during the assistant principalship when new school leaders are inducted, formally and informally, into the profession. It is during that time that they must face many of the issues they will face throughout their career. The way they conduct themselves, based on either their own view of leadership, or that espoused by their principal, will shape their career-long response to similar issues (Hartzell, Williams & Nelson, 1995; Marshall, 1992; Marshall & Mitchell, 1991).

Marshall (1985, 1992) developed a model for examining the professional socialization of assistant principals. The model, based on formal and informal components, included formal training such as university programs, and informal elements such as the administrator grapevine for identifying candidates. The latter

component often led to selection of candidates based on a particular selector's preferences for skills and attitudes toward the job.

Even after selection, role socialization while an assistant principal contributes to the way in which work is done, the way priorities are set, and the way in which one interacts with other school leaders. Marshall (1985) first identified the notion of "professional shock" for newly hired assistant principals. She identified six tasks required of all new assistant principals. They included defining relationships with teachers, the degree to which the assistant principal engaged in curricular and instructional supervision. Other tasks included dealing with the shock of "seeing things that seem unprofessional, unfair, and wrong" (Marshall, 1992, p. 41), and learning how to navigate through the system to get things done by being a street-level bureaucrat.

Essential to success as an assistant principal was conforming to expected patterns of behavior. They included a commitment to do whatever needs to be done, and to spend as much time as necessary to do it and keeping disputes and disagreements with the principal private. Assistant principals were expected to place primary emphasis on work with students (e.g., discipline, lunchroom, buses, sports and other activities).

This study identified several rules that assistant principals must follow in order to advance their career. Among the rules were avoiding open and public disagreements about moral and ethical dilemmas, avoiding display of divergent points-of-view, and building trust by being a "team" player (Marshall, 1992).

Assistant Principals rely heavily on the principal for support when seeking to advance their career. Marshall (1985) found that assistant principals are keenly aware of the need to be unfailingly loyal to the principal, to keep all disagreements private. Principals, the study found, play a critical role in sponsoring assistants for promotion. The absence of sponsorship by the principal can negatively impact one's career. Therefore, assistant principals are placed in a particularly vulnerable position when they view leadership differently than their principal, or when they want to place greater emphasis or priority on issues such as instructional supervision or collaboration with family and community groups.

Methodology

This research, based on activities of the educational leadership program at one state university, is part of a larger investigation of the impact of reformed preparation programs for school leaders framed around national standards. Other aspects of the

study examined student perceptions of quality in preparation programs (Williamson & Hudson, 1998a), changes in the pedagogy of preparation programs (Williamson & Hudson, 2000), the impact of internships (Hudson & Williamson, 2000a), and socialization to the role of school leader (Hudson & Williamson, 2000b).

This particular study examines pressures on women to conform to traditional norms for school leaders as they enter school leadership. It reports on the experience of one set of women who entered school leadership in the fall of 1998 and describes the joys and the frustrations of their experiences implementing their conception of school leadership.

A multiple case study approach was selected for gathering these data (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Lightfoot, 1983; McLaughlin, Irby & Langman, 1994; Polakow, 1993) in order to examine the multiple perspectives that students have of their experience. Data were initially gathered in two ways (Williamson & Hudson, 1998a). First, students completed a short survey providing demographic data and information about their beliefs regarding the role of school leaders. Second, each student met with one of the researchers and participated in a focused interview about their experience in the MSA program and their beliefs about the role of school leaders. Each interview was taped and later transcribed and analyzed for commonalities in language, themes, and perceptions. Neither rigid adherence to an interview guide nor forced respondent compliance was utilized. Priority was given to the dynamic and spontaneous nature of each interview and to the development of a trusting relationship between respondent and researcher (Yin, 1994).

Upon graduation each woman was hired as an assistant principal in a school in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. The researchers continued to gather data from the women during their first two years as a school leader using both structured interviews and e-mail prompts. Additional data will be collected from these school leaders in subsequent years.

Data Sources

The data sources used in this study are primary and naturalistic in nature. Primary data sources were student surveys, individual and focus group interviews, and program documents.

A variety of methods may be used for data collection in a case study. Yin (1994) identified six different sources of information---documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts.

One source of information for case study research is the interview, perhaps one of the most important (Spradley, 1979; Yin, 1994). Three types of interviews are often included in case study methodology: open-ended, focused, and structured.

Focused interviews serve an important function in case study research. They provide an opportunity for the researcher to corroborate certain facts that have already emerged from the documentation. The role of the researcher is to ask specific questions which, when carefully worded, invite respondents to provide their own new or unique perspective on the topic (Yin, 1994). Such a format was selected for this study.

In addition to the interview, other tools were utilized to collect data. They included: a student survey, a critical incident report to provoke thinking about significant events during a student's transition to school leadership, and collection and analysis of respondent responses to e-mail and other prompts.

Collection of Data

Each element of the study utilized a different data collection method. Table I outlines the data sources and collection schedule for this investigation using the crosswalk technique (O'Sullivan, 1990).

The first phase involved data compiled from a student survey administered in the month prior to graduation in May 1998. During this same time selected groups of students participated in focused interviews in which their perceptions of the quality of the program and their preparation were elicited.

Beginning in the fall of 1998 each respondent began their career as a school leader, most as assistant principals. The researchers maintained contact with the students through phone conversations, site visits, and e-mail. Data was collected about their entry to school leadership and issues that they faced as new leaders.

A five-step data collection process was utilized for this study. Each step was designed to gather information about student attitudes toward school leadership and issues that they confronted in their transition to school leadership.

Step 1: Demographic Survey: Students completed a short survey constructed to identify underlying demographic variables which might impact the findings of this investigation. Students enrolled in the final semester of the MSA program were asked to respond to the questions. Based on that information a demographic profile of students emerged.

Table 1
Evaluation Cross-Walk

Questions	Data Sources: Survey	Writing Samp	Interview	Incident Rpt
1. Who are our students?	X			
2. What beliefs do students hold about school leadership?		X	X	
3. What critical events mold and shape student thinking about leadership?			X	X
4. What issues do students face in transitioning to school leadership?			X	X
5. How do they deal with differences in their beliefs about the role of school leaders and those espoused by other school leaders?			X	X

X - Item covered by this data source

Step 2: Focused Interviews. Following examination of these data students met with one of the researchers and participated in a lengthy focused interview about their experience in the MSA program. Each interview was taped and later transcribed and analyzed for commonalities in language, themes, and beliefs about school leadership.

Open-ended questions were asked based upon the information provided in the surveys. The interviews allowed the researchers to probe the written responses and elicit information from the respondents that would elaborate on their thinking. Information provided by the respondents was redirected to the respondents for clarification and explication. Neither rigid adherence to an interview guide nor forced respondent compliance was utilized. Priority was given to the dynamic and spontaneous nature of each interview and to the development of a trusting relationship between respondent and researcher (Yin, 1994).

Step 3: Written Work as Students. During the first semester in the program students were asked to prepare a written statement of beliefs about leadership and the role of the school leader. Upon completion of the program students prepared a similar statement for their exit portfolio. Both writing samples were reviewed to identify key words and phrases that illustrated student thinking about leadership. The documents were further analyzed to identify patterns and trends in student thinking as they continued their role as school leaders.

Step 4: Critical Incident Report. Respondents completed a Critical Incident Report. This report was designed to heighten student awareness of an incident that shaped their entry to school leadership. Each respondent had full authority for selection of the incident. The only guidelines provided to respondents was that the incident have special significance to them and that it served as a catalyst for clarifying and understanding their beliefs about school leadership.

Step 5: Documents and Other Artifacts. Each respondent was invited to provide documents and other artifacts that reflected on their entry to school leadership. Once again, respondents selected the items. Most essential was that the artifacts have special significance about the transition to school leadership for the respondent.

Analysis of Data

The data collection methods established for this study provided an array of statements, documents, and observations. All information was organized, categorized, analyzed, and synthesized beginning with initial data collection as suggested by Fetterman (1989), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Yin (1994). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) noted that "data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds" (p. 127).

The researchers analyzed the transcribed interviews and a tally of key words or phrases was obtained. This analysis assisted the researchers in focusing subsequent data analysis activities on these descriptors.

Several strategies were suggested for analysis of data during a case study. They included writing memos to oneself or keeping a reflective field log (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); preparation of analytic files organized by generic category such as title, introduction, conclusion, quotations (Lofland, 1971); and use of coding systems to organize information (Charles, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

An ongoing data analysis process was utilized for this study (Eisner, 1991; Yin, 1994). Information was arranged in files for each cohort of students (Glesne &

Peshkin (1992). Sources of information were charted and coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Charles' (1995) four steps were utilized to identify topics, cluster topics into categories, form categories into patterns, and develop conclusions based upon the patterns.

The data for this study was gathered from students in the natural setting of the MSA program. What Lincoln and Guba (1985) call naturalistic inquiry, others call a phenomenological approach. Borg, Gall and Gall (1993) elaborated on the value of such an approach. It allows the researcher to "develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context" (p. 194). It is based on an appreciation for the uniqueness of each individual and the settings in which they live and work. This "phenomenological reality" (p. 194) is particularly relevant when the researchers want to examine and understand a program or event from "the perspective of the participants" (p. 195).

While such studies provide valuable insights into the thinking of the subjects, they are limited in the ability to make generalizations based on their findings. Findings are very context-specific, reflecting the unique orientation of the subjects. Therefore, this study is limited in two ways:

- The information generated by this study, while useful in identifying specific student perspectives on the value of selected administrator preparation programs, is limited by the unique characteristics of the students who participated in the study and the program in which they were enrolled.
- The results of the study are not generalizable and cannot be construed to be applicable to other programs in other locations.

No two individuals experience socialization exactly the same way. Therein lies the dilemma regarding generalizability. While drawing conclusions and making inferences is complex, Creswell (1998) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that it is possible to create meaning and promote understanding of a phenomenon, even though it is embedded in a specific context.

This investigation into the intricacies of role socialization by one cohort of new school leaders provides an opportunity to learn of their struggles, the tensions between their preparation and their practice, and to identify the strategies they adopted to cope with these tensions. Their story can illuminate our understanding of how school leadership is shaped and molded generation to generation.

Sample

A cohort of 15 students graduated in May 1998 from a school leadership program in a southeastern state. The cohort consisted of both full-time and part-time students. All students completed the same program and had similar experiences in the program. As they exited the program, data was collected through a survey and via exit interviews. Most were immediately employed as school leaders

The researchers maintained contact with the cohort after their entry to school leadership and invited the each of the cohort members to participate in an ongoing investigation of the factors that shaped their socialization to school leadership. During the summer of 2000 , two years following graduation, members of the cohort were contacted by the researchers and invited to contribute additional information about their initial experiences as a school leader.

Ten members responded affirmatively. They were predominantly female, representing the university's roots as a college for women. All were Caucasian. Otherwise the sample was diverse---reflecting a range of experience levels, types of schools and communities, and age. Table 2 provides detail about the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Gender	
Female	9
Male	1
Age	
Less than 30	0
30-39	6
40-49	4
More than 49	0
Current Role	
Assistant Principal	6
Principal	3
Other School Personnel	1
Ethnicity	
African-American	0
Caucasian	10
Other	0
Years Experience as a Teacher	
Less than 3	0
3 - 5	2
6 - 10	4
11 - 15	1
16-20	2
More than 20	1
Type of Community	
Urban	3
Suburban	1
Rural	1
Medium Size City	1
Small Town/City	4
School Level	
Elementary	5
Middle / Jr. High	2
High	2
Years as Assistant Principal	
Less than 1	2
1 to 2	4
More than 2	4

Findings

The 15 students followed in this study graduated with very clear ideas about leadership and their preferences for leadership style (Williamson & Hudson, 1998b; Hudson & Williamson, 1999; Hudson & Williamson, 2000b). They appreciated the importance of teaching and learning and wanted to focus on strengthening their school's response. One student described her desire to, "work with teachers to improve education for students." They knew they wanted to advocate for students, especially those who were marginalized. They wanted to "share a vision of school improvement" in settings characterized by wide participation, collaboration, inclusion, and respect for all. These students exited the program with both the desire and the ability to challenge assumptions about schooling and to "make a difference."

As a part of their program, these graduates studied the concept of socialization and knew that during their transition into leadership they would encounter both explicit and implicit expectations for their role. Even forewarned, it was impossible to predict how they might resist socialization to old norms, norms that might be contrary to their own beliefs and commitments.

Focused interviews and critical incident reports were used to capture the experiences of the students' transition into leadership and assess their ability to "make a difference" in part by resisting socialization to old ways. Ten of the 15 students were interviewed. The only male in the cohort moved out of state, one entered a district-level staff role, and one delayed entry into the job market. The 12 remaining women served in school-based leadership positions, 4 as principals and 8 as assistant principals.

Socialization is Real

Predictions about socialization based on the literature were true. New school leaders, in spite of their preparation, experienced trials and tribulations as they learned the regularities of the job. As they went about their daily routines, they often experienced frustration. Much of that frustration came from the realization that such constraints on their time limited their ability to effect change, to "make a difference" and to attend to the roles their felt were most important.

The "professional shocks" described by Marshall (1985, 1992) existed for these new school leaders. Their encounters with "seeing things that seem unprofessional, unfair, and wrong" (Marshall, 1992, p. 41), both surprised and hurt

them. Their discoveries that teachers broke rules they expected students to obey, that principals behaved in inappropriate ways, and that parents wrongly accused them of racial bias created personal difficulties.

Most predominant was the "shock" that not all teachers were good. One was surprised to learn that not all teachers did as she had, "came to work every day, did my job, volunteered to do the extras, cared about kids." She hoped that her discovery would not give her a "cynical, jaded perspective."

Resisting Socialization

Interviews indicated an awareness of socialization. Many of the graduates described their first year as a learning time, a time to build understanding of the school culture by observing regularities and relationships. In these cases, however, the act of learning about their new context did not imply that they embraced the existing norms. On the contrary, they found ways to resist such socialization, to hold to the beliefs they held as graduates and to maintain commitments to practice in ways consistent with those beliefs.

The perception that they were "biding their time" was common among many of these women. They were trained to be principals. While they knew they would begin their careers as assistants and understood the limitations of the role, they remained focused on the longer term.

One goal of their preparation program included helping students develop an internal compass, a set of clear beliefs that would guide their practice as principals. The graduates reported that the same internal compass guided them as assistant principals. One assistant principal described approaching situations with, "What would I do? If this were my decision to make, what would I do and how would I implement it?"

Resistance through Knowledge

Knowledge of the assistant principals' role, of school culture, and of power and politics all served these graduates as they transitioned to their new roles. In order to develop new rules for the game, they first had to survive settings characterized by old rules. To do so, they spent time "figuring out what was going on." They asked questions like, "Who's in the know?" and "Who gets listened to?" As one of them pointed out, "I had to learn it so I would know how to resist."

The principal was key to the transitions of these women. In some cases, principals were already creating new rules for the game and welcomed the graduates

as team members. In one such case, the graduate found, "no line between what the principal and the assistant principal do" and described a situation where "everything is really a team." This student saw communication as the key, revealed in the several formal and informal conversations she and the principal had each day. She continued, "If you can't even talk to your principal about the way things are going, I just don't know how you'd make it." In other cases, knowledge of school and district politics helped students figure out how to work around the principal without appearing disloyal.

Several stories of successful transition reflected a knowledge of the importance of language and careful use of language. One student, for instance, reported that she was implicitly, but publicly showing disagreement with her principal through her language. When she disagreed with a principal decision, she would convey it as, "Ms. Jones wants us to do...." When she agreed with the decision, her word choice switched from "Ms. Jones" to "we." This realization and its suggestion of disloyalty led her to attend carefully to her choice of words.

Another student spoke of using language carefully to strengthen and enhance rather than to criticize. She began with questions like, "How have things been done traditionally?" She talked about her later success using questions aimed at improvement rather than challenging authority. Rather than criticize what had been done in the past, she formulated questions using phrases like, "How might we refine?" or "How might we strengthen?" Such care is typical of the feminine tendency to use language that is more tentative and conditional, not to convey uncertainty, but to invite others into the conversation (Holmes, 1984; Marshall, 1988).

One of the women reported that she continued to use language carefully even after she became a principal. As an assistant principal, she had observed her principal deal with angry, disgruntled parents. When such parents would threaten, "I'm going to the superintendent," the principal would respond, "Go ahead." As a principal, her standard language in the same situation was, "That certainly is your right. Let me give you the number."

Such language reflects a confidence that was apparent in these graduates. This woman was confident that she had made a good decision, one that was consistent with her beliefs, that was both moral and legal, and that served the best interest of students. She was not afraid to listen to opposing points of view; neither was she afraid to have the decision challenged. Both knowledge and her internal compass contributed to that confidence.

Resistance through Competence and Confidence

Confidence grounded in competence characterized all of the graduates. Only one incident where a student questioned a major decision surfaced. In this instance, the woman followed the principal's direction and filed a police report about a rule violation. Her analysis was grounded in, "What would I have done? Did this really serve the student and the school community well?" This same woman, though, said, "Things are finally steady, real solid; I'm beginning to think I'm pretty good at what I'm doing."

With that one exception, graduates saw themselves as well satisfied with their own abilities to do the job. They were not, however, always satisfied with the job they were doing. Too often, they perceived themselves acting as managers, rather than leaders, focusing on structural activities rather than instructional. They reported the frustrations associated with multiple tasks and too little time. One described the first two years as, "just keeping my head above water, getting all that paperwork done." Another, a new principal, was "on cloud nine" when she was appointed. "Now," she said, "I've faced reality. It's not what I thought it was going to be. It's just me on my own and it's killing me."

That sense of competence and confidence may, unfortunately, lead to several of these women choosing to leave school leadership. As one of them pointed out, "We have lots of options," both within and outside the school world. One student, now ready for a principalship, intends to leave her district if she is not promoted. In some, dissatisfaction with their inability to make a difference led them to consider jobs outside of education. In some, where time demands have begun to infringe on life choices such as having families, spending time with family, or serving the community, the students reflected confidence in their abilities. As one said, "We have few constraints," and another supported the perception with, "There are lots of things we could do."

Resistance Through Program Influence

Most of the graduates attributed some of their success in resisting socialization to their preparation. Their knowledge of who they were, what they stood for, and how to work with people were connected to their graduate studies. For them, the deliberate connections made between preparation and "real life work" served them well in their first jobs. As one new principal expressed it, "You taught

me that I couldn't do it all in the first year. So I listened and am making some changes that matter to the teachers. I'm working on relationships. We'll get there."

As part of their preparation, these students wrote personal platforms articulating core beliefs about themselves as school leaders. As part of this study, they were asked to reconsider those platforms and share how their platform had changed since they became a school leader. Virtually all of the interviewees claimed that there had been little change, that the core beliefs identified while students still guided their practice. One typical graduate reported, "It has hardly changed at all. I can now be more specific about how my principles apply to situations, but basically they are my core beliefs and they have not changed."

In general, graduates appreciated the problem and practice-based aspects of the program and stated that they were able to make almost daily connections between their preparation and their jobs. As one reflected, "I felt as prepared as anybody could be." In particular, they cited several useful aspects of their training that had proved useful. One, for instance, was the "people skills" they had learned. Understanding the value of listening, internalizing the value and importance of relationships served them well in their transitions to school leadership. These were not just "taught," but also modeled in their preparation. One student remembered that,

> You [professors] were always asking us, 'Is this working for you? Is this useful? And you listened to our answers. Most of the time it was working. When it wasn't, you made modifications. It was clear that you cared about what we thought.

Another reflected, "I loved the way you [professors] really took an interest in the students and really had a relationship with us."

Though the graduates did not use the term "internal compass," it was clear from their words that they had one, that they fine-tuned it during their preparation, and took it with them when they graduated. Regardless of where they went, of whether they had good or bad first mentors, they had used this internal compass to guide them.

Gender as a Factor in Socialization

The women studied graduated from a program where standards were aligned with leadership beliefs and practices traditionally associated with a feminine style (Hudson & Williamson, 2000b). Most of the women saw connections between their gender-related leadership styles and preferences and the socialization process. In most cases, those preferences contributed to their success in resisting

socialization to old norms. However, not all gender-connected experiences were positive.

Awareness of Gender

Two of the women reported blatant behavior associated with their gender. In one case, a woman assuming the principalship in a small district where "good ol' boys" practiced old norms encountered demeaning comments like, "Don't worry your pretty little head." In another case, more subtle discrimination was detected when a young, newly married woman told a district "superior" that she would look elsewhere if she did not soon become a principal. To that, the man, whose job included mentoring new leaders, replied, "But don't you have a family? I didn't realize you could be mobile."

In most cases, the women in this study experienced a more subtle "testing." Many of them reported perceiving that their feminine style was being questioned. One, for instance, wrestled with the need to "be more assertive." One took care that her calm demeanor "was not seen as a sign of weakness." Another wondered whether or not she needed to "act more male" and another expressed concern that her feminine preferences were sometimes perceived as "weak" or "wishy-washy" and feared that she needed to consciously avoid "being a wimp."

On the whole, these women saw their feminine styles and preferences as more an asset than a liability. On the other hand, none saw those predispositions as "enough" to ensure their successful transitions into leadership.

Feminine Style as Important, not Sufficient

The women in this study identified several characteristics associated with the feminine as important to their success as assistant principals and principals. On the other hand, those attributes, while important, were not sufficient.

For instance, many of the women cited their listening skills as an asset. Their listening demonstrated the value they placed on people and relationships. By listening, they conveyed that they cared about others, that they valued the dissonant voices as well as the mainstream. After some early periods of skepticism, teachers appreciated their listening. By listening well, these women learned about the school's people, politics and culture.

On the other hand, the women recognized some problems with listening. For instance, one struggled with the misperception by others that "listening means I agree." Attentive, active listening can be misconstrued, perhaps because it is a

"new norm," one to which others in the school are not accustomed. One woman spoke of a teacher who felt she had been heard, who felt "validated" and "recognized" in a budget discussion. The teacher was most surprised and hurt when the assistant principal later argued against spending the money the way the teacher wanted. Emotionally, the teacher responded, "I can't believe you would sway people like that. I thought you were listening to me."

The feminine knowledge of and interest in teaching and learning was also seen as an asset. Teacher resistance to the new assistant principals' involvement at the classroom level was often short lived. Quickly, such involvement was seen as an indicator of caring—about teachers, teaching and learning, and students. One graduate described her own view of the assistant principal when she was a teacher: "When I saw an assistant principal coming, I turned and went in another direction. It was always about discipline, an observation, or to ask for something." It did not surprise her, therefore, that teachers were initially cautious. Quickly, however, they came to welcome her and to believe that she cared about what was going on in the classroom. "Now," she said, "people don't turn around and go the other way when I come."

The ethic of care that is associated with the feminine also emerged as an asset. Though only their third years, many of these women reported that others had come to trust them and their decision-making. Many reported that others knew and appreciated that their decisions were grounded in what was right, not necessarily what was legal. One graduate described an encounter with a student who had a drug problem. She offered the student three options: she could "play" the assistant principal (with legal implications), an educator with substance abuse expertise, or "mom." The student chose "mom." In the end, her "goal was accomplished. The student got some help." Even when those affected could not know all the details, most had come to respect decisions that they knew were based on students' best interests rather than solely on policy.

While these feminine characteristics were seen as positive contributors to the transition, they alone were not sufficient. As one put it, "It is ultimately how you deliver that matters." One graduate stated that, "While teachers appreciate the fact that I listen to them, there is more. They know that I will follow-up on their questions and requests, and they really appreciate that."

Feminine Style as Contributor to Toll of Caring

Studies of women and men in leadership positions have found that ambition, position power, and prestige are less important as motivators to women (Helgeson, 1990; Neuse, 1978; Stamm & Ryff, 1984). The experience of these women confirmed that finding. What matters to them is service and the personal and professional fulfillment that comes with "making a difference." The care for the marginal student (Shakeshaft, 1987b) associated with the feminine is revealed in the stories of these women.

One woman works in a school characterized by families living with poverty and unemployment. Frequently, the children are hungry. This woman, now a principal, works with the cafeteria manager to ensure that on Mondays and Fridays, the children are served "larger than prescribed" portions because there is little to eat at home on the weekends. In another school, the rules are stretched to get a student with a drug arrest back in school because at home, "her uncles were using her to distribute and her grandmother is too old and too powerless to care." Instead of letting her drop out, they "created an opportunity" for the student to use a learning lab and an experimental on-line service to continue to earn credits.

Such caring takes a toll, however. Along with the professional shocks some of these graduates have faced, the toll associated with caring has generated concerns. One woman asks, "Is it worth it?" and another wonders, "Given how I have to spend so much of my time, can I really make a difference?"

These women are competent, confident, and caring—they are good at what they are doing. Yet several of them have begun to second-guess their decisions to become school leaders. Yes, they are resisting socialization to old norms. But at what cost? As one of them put it, "Is this really how I want to spend my time?"

Conclusion

School leadership preparation programs are confronted by complex issues--greater accountability for training school leaders, clearly articulated standards for the performance of school leaders, national testing of applicants, and demand for creating a new style of school leader. Together these factors place competing and often conflicting demands on such programs.

To avoid the continuation of "business as usual" it is imperative that programs gather data about the impact of newly designed programs on the "real" work of

school leaders---to examine and understand whether altered preparation results in changes in leadership behavior. One first step is to investigate the trials and tribulations of new assistant principals to identify strategies which enable or hinder them to resist past practice. A next step is to devise ways to support them in that effort.

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